



Date: December 3, 2009

To: Members of the House of Representatives

From: Rebecca Park, State Governmental Affairs

Re: HB 5380

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Farm Bureau members are congregating in Grand Rapids for the Farm Bureau Annual Meeting December 2-4, 2009.

Michigan Farm Bureau appreciates the opportunity to provide written comment regarding House Bill 5380. In many areas of the state, Michigan has an overpopulation of deer. Deer cause damage to crops and pose risks for disease transmission. The H-3 version of HB 5380 would extend the current authority of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to regulate baiting and feeding. The H-4 version being offered to the committee would have a different outcome by only allowing regulation of feeding in areas where a diseased animal has been found. **Farm Bureau policy supports HB 5380 (H-3) and opposes 5380 (H-4).**

The issue of supplemental feeding of deer has been a contentious issue for more than 10 years for our organization. This issue has received debate every year, sometimes by very impassioned members. At the end of each year, when the policy book is finalized, the delegates have voted to include language supporting a ban on supplemental feeding of deer.

Multiple studies discuss the reasons why supplemental feeding of deer should not be commonplace. Some of the reasons cited are, feeding deer in late fall may disrupt deer migration to natural wintering areas; predation not starvation is a major cause of winter mortality; deer feeding sites may increase deer/vehicle collisions.

Farm Bureau policy supports hunting as an appropriate means of wildlife management. Wildlife is an important part of Michigan's outdoor heritage and the State's economy. Sound biological science must be used to manage wildlife properly and the minimize property loss and the spread of diseases.

We urge your support of HB 5380 (H-3) and opposition HB 5380 (H-4). The H-4 version would require that supplemental feeding regulations be restricted to areas where bovine tuberculosis or chronic wasting disease is found. Farm Bureau supports a statewide ban on baiting and feeding.

I can be contacted via cell at 517-243-0777 if there are questions.

Thank you  
Rebecca Park